PROJECT NARRATIVE

PROJECT:

830 2nd Ave NW
9-unit apartment building

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES:

The primary goal for this project is to create an apartment building that will provide 9 apartments on a small property of 6,000 sqf in Central Issaquah District. The building will be made of 3 floors as per below:

- Main floor: entrance to the main street (2nd Ave NW), an ADA unit, a leasing office / storage, and a dedicated parking space for each one of the units with entrance to the garage from the back alley
- 2nd and 3rd floors: each made of two 2 bed/2 bath and two 2 bed/1 bath units as well as an additional egress

This new proposal is meant to address the city Issaquah planners' feedback as part of our 1st round of pre-application review.

All other aspects of the project remain unchanged, and we understand that most of the previously provided comments around Engineering, Public Works, Storm Water will still sustain.

The new project will have a total FAR of 8,778 sqf and therefore subject to Level 1 review.
This project will exceed the base FAR (6,000 x 1.25 = 7,500) by 1,279 sqf (8779 – 7500). As part of our mitigation plans for both mandatory and optional part of our obligations, we are planning to pay the density bonus fees.

As a result of our evaluations we and have determined that the project we are proposing and as more fully described in the following documents provided a more personalized and creative environment for the residents and one that more successfully addressed the City of Issaquah's Development Guidelines for this Mixed Use Residential Zone.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

The proposed site (and the neighboring properties) is relatively flat (see attached survey) and has at present a vacant single story residential structure that exhibits some level of fire damage and is not suitable for occupancy. The dwelling was previously occupied by the current owner and served as a commercial office facility for the owner's business. The property is bordered on the south by a townhouse style apartment project; on the west across 2nd Ave. by what appears to be a two-story senior independent housing development; on the north by a single-story single family home structure of roughly the same vintage as the dwelling on the subject property and on the east across the adjoining alley by a newer three-story townhome row house project with first story garages.

The ages and the architectural styles of the neighboring properties are quite variable and do not portray a strong consistency of character, finishes or design theme. The neighborhood structures vary from single story to three story height with the newer properties seeming to push to a greater extent towards the three-story stature. Almost all of the structures in the neighborhood are I believe of wood frame construction and generally appear in good repair. There are many existing trees in the neighborhood, some of relatively good size, which give the neighborhood a very comfortable canopy and a nice residential feel despite the neighborhood's close proximity to the commercial activities of Gilman Village. It is our conclusion from our review of existing conditions and more recent neighborhood development trends that the project we are proposing is consistent with a neighborhood that is undergoing a transition to more intensive development but remains consistent with the scale of neighboring properties. Project Consistent with City of Issaquah Development Guidelines

SITE AND BUILDING DESIGN:

11.3 Standards for All Uses

1) Pedestrian Connections. Pedestrian facility connections shall be convenient and with generally no further than 250 feet of separation when a block length exceeds 300 feet.

The proposal will add a 5 foot wide public pedestrian sidewalk along the property frontage, a 5' wide landscape strip and a curb and gutter at the street.

F. Establish Streetwall (Build-To-Lines). Buildings and other structures shall be located toward he Circulation Facilities and Community Spaces to meet "Build-To-Lines" as required in the District Standards Table, Chapter 4.0. Architectural and landscape elements shall be used to maintain a strong streetwall presence that softens the pedestrian experience.

1) Variation in the Build To-Line. The space between the property line and the building shall include landscaping with evergreen plantings to maintain year round interest in combination with benches, low walls, and other hardscape elements to enhance the social interaction, soften hardscape spaces and contribute to the Green Necklace while establishing a boundary between public and semi-private areas. See also Chapter 14.3.A.3. (Building Mass and Design) Other pedestrian amenities may also be used, for instance, the public sidewall: may be widened to include elements such as additional walkway width, outdoor seating, retail displays, landscape planters, benches or fountains while maintaining a pedestrian friendly environment on the sidewalk.

The principal entry for the apartment building faces the main street and the public way.

G. Minimum Building Frontage. Sufficient length of buildings shall be present at the Build-To-Line to maintain a generally continuous streetwall and limit spatial gaps to those necessary to accommodate vehicular and pedestrian access. Minimum Building Frontage shall be as follows:

2) In all other zones, minimum Building Frontage is at least 60%.

The building frontage is above 70%

M. Residential Front Door Orientation. Residential buildings shall orient the principal facade to the street or a street-facing courtyard, with the doorway of ground floor units visible and accessible to the same street. See also Building Design, Chapter 14.0.

See response for F above

14.2 General Standards

B. Avoid blank walls, especially when adjacent to Circulation Facilities.

3) If windows and doors are not present, articulation or other techniques shall be used such as piers, modulation, and detailing; combinations of materials and textures as well as their detailing; applied elements such as art and trellises.

The units on all facades are designed to incorporate a range of materials, textures and colors

4) Generally, buildings should have no "back side."

The building on all of facades are designed to be viewed both individually and as a complimentary

whole.

D. A continuous street wall shall be provided, or elements to substitute for the street wall where one is not present along Circulation Facilities and Community Spaces. The street wall should balance with the need for variations in scale, plane, materials, and character, to make the experience interesting for pedestrians. Also consider opportunities for gathering, greenery, and light.

The narrowness of the site (50') has limited our opportunities to add additional building structures along the public pedestrian sidewalk. As noted above the apartment building entrance is the primary "frontage" structure
and its façade shows a variety of planar variations which include a first level covered entry canopy. Three different finish materials are proposed

E. Informal gathering areas and opportunities for social interaction shall be incorporated.

There are two open community areas considered on both side of the building facing the front street.

F. Buildings shall be situated so that they encroach into and engage with the Public Realm to bring visual interest, variation, and intimacy to the streetscape, while maintaining the pedestrian through-route. Activity areas in the right-of-way shall comply with IMC 12.05 Sidewalk Use District.

The narrowness of the site (50') has limited our opportunities to add additional building structures along the public pedestrian sidewalk.

G. Developments should implement the most effective and innovative sustainable green building program measures. Furthermore developments should build from the experience of local and regional sustainable developments including Issaquah projects Z-Home and Fire Station #72. Sustainable building design should also address other green aspects, such as conduit for fiber, broadband readiness and lighting power minimization.

It is our intention to pursue a BUILT GREEN 5 STAR (residential) certification.

14.3 Building Mass and Design

A. Standards for All Uses: Design the buildings to reinforce a Pedestrian Friendly environment using the following techniques.

2) Break larger buildings into the appearance of several smaller buildings. If aligned or appropriate for a Secondary Through Pathway, then buildings that are physically separated shall be separated by at least 13' to allow for a Secondary Through Pathway.

The narrowness of the site (50') has limited our opportunities to add additional building structures along the public pedestrian sidewalk. The proposal does provide modulation at top level to reduce the overscale of the proposed building. For a project of this scale which is 36'x 113' we be believe that modulation, reveals and color pattern will meet the intend of the code.

3) Provide surface relief, depth and shadows to the facade and create a consistent street wall by:

See response to Item 14.2.D above.

a) recessing or projecting elements of the facade, especially windows

The proposed project modulation at the top level and level one material is brick while the other floor are cementitious panels with reveals

b) changing character, materials, color or height, or

See response a)

c) varying the build-to line(s)
The narrowness of the site (50') has limited our opportunities to add additional building structures along the public pedestrian sidewalk. We are proposing to use the setback standards for this zone for the remaining building placement

6) To increase a building's architectural detail and level of interest, windows shall be:
a. Divided light windows, or
b. Operable (in accordance with the Building Code), or
c. Trimmed around framed openings, or
d. Recessed or projecting from the building facade and not flush

In order to differentiate this project from the similar projects in the vicinity we feel that all these elements are not required to create aesthetically pleasing project

14.4 Ground Level Details

A. Standards for All Uses: Design the buildings to reinforce a pedestrian-friendly environment using the following techniques

1) Retail uses facing Circulation Facilities should use large street level windows lJ1at allow pedestrians to see activity within shops, when feasible.

We are not proposing ground floor retail for this project.

2) An open design for gates and fences shall be used to allow social interaction. Delineate semi-public and semi-private space from public areas with railings or fences no more than three feet (3') tall (unless fall protection is required), planters, or overhead elements.

No fence is proposed for this project

3) The ground floor shall be designed to incorporate active, visible uses (e.g. retail) or other visible uses that engage the pedestrian (e.g. residences, meeting rooms, lobbies, live/ work). Where office and other uses require ground floor privacy, then a combination of landscaping, low walls, fencing and other built elements should create layers, differing textures, and semi-transparency to define these semi-private areas while maintaining a pedestrian friendly environment.

As noted above the Units are designed to be primarily residential but offer some flexibility to provide commercial occupancies primarily in a live/work setting.

4) Numerous and separated, rather than consolidated, entrances shall be used such as regular use of individual entrances to businesses and residences. Entrances shall be reinforced with the use of traditional "main street" design and repeated architectural elements such as windows, weather protection, pedestrian oriented signage, archways, doors, accent lights and piers, columns or pilasters.

The main building entrance is facing the front street. All individual apartment entrances are facing interior corridors.

5) Primary building entrances shall be accessible and visible from Circulation Facilities. Primary building entrances may also be accessed from secondary or non-pedestrian oriented

Each of the Units is provided with a private primary entrance that is directly accessed from the interior corridors.

6) Each primary building entrance shall have weather protection and highlight the presence of the entrance to pedestrians through the use of architectural treatments such as modulation and articulation changes in the street wall or building facade, and lighting. Primary pedestrian entrances shall be visually more prominent than secondary entrances.

Please see response to Item 4 above.

7) For buildings that have more than one frontage along a Circulation Facility, each frontage shall receive individual and detailed ground level detail treatment to complement the designated pedestrian character.

8) Ground level uses shall provide street front windows that:

a) Occupy a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the building frontage, and

b) Use clear glazing on a minimum of 75 percent (75%) of the windows.

All glazing shall be clear insulated glazing.

This may be reviewed by the Director on a case by case basis when the security and privacy requirements of the tenant need to be balanced with the character of the Circulation Facility.

9) Mirrored or reflective glass and film are not allowed.

None are proposed for this project.

11) Landscaping including evergreen plantings to maintain year-round interest, shall be located between the property line and the building to soften hardscape spaces and contribute to the Green Necklace. Plantings may be located in at-grade or raised planters, containers, window box planters, upon trellises, etc. Where the building is located at the property line, plantings may be located in building bays such as required in Section 14.3.A.3 Building Mass and Design. Plantings may also extend onto the adjacent right-of-way as determined by the Director

.

We are proposing 3' wide strip on side yards and 7' on the rear yard.

12) A mixture of the following design elements shall be incorporated into building design to best enhance the ground level details.

a. Clerestories over storefront windows,

b. Projecting window sills

c. Medallions

d. Benches and seat walls along twenty-five percent (25%) of the length of the facade,

e. Decorative brick, tile or stone work on the ground floor facade, or

f. Other techniques that achieve the overall intent of this section as approved by the Director

B. Standards for Ground Level Residential Uses: Design the buildings to reinforce a pedestrian friendly environment using the following techniques.

3) Any building abutting a Circulation Facility shall be oriented to the Circulation Facility. The primary entry or entries for all ground-floor units abutting the Circulation Facility, and the primary entry for residential buildings without ground floor units facing the street such as entries through lobbies and parking garages, shall open directly onto the Circulation Facility.

N/A.

4) Architecture and landscape architecture features shall be used to further enhance and identify the pedestrian entry experience. Primary building entries shall include a clearly identifiable entry doorway visible from the Circulation Facility, enhanced landscaping, special paving, pedestrian-scaled lighting

and/or lighted bollards, and a weatherproof roof covering, appropriate to the size and importance of the entry but at least six feet (6') deep and four feet (4') wide.

4.5 Weather Protection

B. Standards for Residential Uses

1) Weather protection is required over building entrances for Residential Uses at least four (4) feet deep and four (4) feet wide.

All units comply.

14.6 Roofs and Parapets

A. Standards for All Uses

1) Rooftops should be used as active amenities, such as for community gardens, recreation, and useable courtyards, when feasible.

All units have roof top decks and they are considered private

2) Where active uses cannot be placed on rooftops, use them for passive activities, such as green roofs to partially address storm water, solar panels, art and/or design to make them visually interesting, as well as a means to allow access to light and air for adjacent occupied space.

See response above.

3) Consider making some rooftops accessible to the public.

N/A

5) Parapets shall not be excessively tall and dominate the facade; they may be used to highlight focal points of the building. Parapets shall not appear as flat and obviously false extensions of building wall sections, but rather appear as distinct building masses and extend into the depth of the building.

Only proposed parapets are demising walls

6) Parapets shall not exceed twenty five (25%) of the height of the supporting wall, as measured from grade to the exterior roof sur/ace and shall not exceed eight (8) feet in height.

Only proposed parapets are demising walls

8) Sloped roofs shall have pitched roofs with a minimum slope of 4:12. Large roofs that extend longer than 60 feet shall have a change in form such as a change in height, pitch, orientation, or other changes in form at a spacing to break up the massiveness of a continuous, uninterrupted sloping roof.

All units comply since slope roof are not proposed

9) Roof surfaces, exclusive of space dedicated to mechanical systems, vegetated roof sur/aces or solar panels, shall use a "white roof' with a Solar Reflectance Index (SRI) of seventy-eight (78) or greater, or similar equipment with a similar purpose. The Director may allow a lower SRI (darker roof) if there is a showing of extreme hardship in meeting this requirement.

All roof surfaces will have a Solar Reflectance Index (SRI) of seventy-eight (78) or greater.

10) Mechanical, electrical, and communication equipment, satellite dishes, Utilities, infrastructure housing, HVAC, but excepting renewable energy appurtenances, shall be screened from views above and at ground level, surrounding streets and surrounding buildings. The devices shall be screened in a method that is integrated with the architectural character of the building

We are not proposing any roof type units

8. Landscaping:

- Street trees are required.
- Tree Retention and Minimum Tree Density are required.

10.3 Landscape Requirements: Circulation Elements and Community Space:

A. Street Trees

Street Trees provide shade, visual amenity, and buffer pedestrians and bicyclists from vehicular movement.

1) Street Trees shall be determined by the City as part of an approved Street Tree Plan. Trees planted under overhead utility wires shall be of a smaller variety (as specified by the Approved Street Tree List) which will not grow up to interfere with the wires.

Street trees shall be planted in the ROW planting strip per City requirements.

2) Street Trees shall be required in all rights-of-way unless on exception is approved by the Director and shall be a minimum of two (2) inch caliper at the time of planting. Character, type of facility, adjacent uses, a sense of overall comfort and urban design, etc. will determine the tree appropriateness along other types of circulation facilities. The minimum tree pit size in a tree well shall be twenty-four (24) square feet and the minimum tree pit shall be three (3) times the size of the rootball. Permanent or temporary irrigation shall be required for a minimum of three (3) years.

We will follow City guidelines for planting within the ROW.

3) Where Street Trees are required, they shall be provided at 30 feet on center, see Section 10.18.8 for circumstances where there may be a modification of tree spacing.

We will follow City guidelines for planting within the ROW.

10.10 Minimum Tree Density

A. A minimum tree density of retained and replanted trees shall be maintained in the Developable Site Area of all developed sites. The minimum tree density shall be four (4) significant trees (or their equivalent size in caliper inches at 4.5 feet above ground) per 5,000 square feet of Developable Site Area.

10.13 Tree Retention Requirements

Individual deciduous trees or clusters of trees with outstanding qualities, form and health shall be retained whenever possible. The soil around retained trees shall remain undisturbed with a disturbance free zone extending beyond their critical root zone. The soil grade around an individual tree within a cluster designated for retention shall not be altered within the critical root zone of the tree or within 15 feet of its trunk, whichever is greater. Trees shall not be designated for retention if they are dead or in a declining state, or if they are hazardous.
A. Tree Retention Requirements:

1) General Tree Retention Requirements: Significant trees on lots proposed for project development or redevelopment in Central Issaquah shall be retained as follows:

a. 25% of the total caliper (4.5 feet above ground or "dbh") of all significant trees in Developable Site Area shall be retained except as modified by “Modification to Tree Retention Requirements” below.

2) Priority of Tree Retention Requirements: Significant trees shall be retained in the following priority order:

a. Priority One:

i. Significant trees, especially Landmark trees, which can integrate into, and enhance, a development, such as part of a Community Space;

ii. Significant trees on slopes greater than twenty (20) percent

See attached arborist report